

Minnesota Music Teachers Association

MMTA

The Mission of the Minnesota Music Teachers Association is to advance the profession of music teaching through education, certification, and advocacy. MMTA is an affiliate of Music Teachers National Association (MTNA).

As an MMTA & MTNA teacher, my students have many opportunities in which they can choose to participate: Ensemble Festivals, Contests, Theory exams, Music Bridges and more. Contests are competitions with students statewide, exams are individual achievements and accomplishments. Interested and qualified students will be encouraged and invited to participate when they have completed the necessary studio requirements. Fees for participation in a program must be paid by the teacher by the registration deadline. No refunds are granted if a student is unable to participate once registered for the event. Scheduled requests for general A.M. or P.M. times will be honored as time allows.

Here is a brief description of the MMTA opportunities:

MMTA Ensemble Festival (Zoom Virtual Event & Video Submissions) – Ensemble Festivals are held in November. The purpose of MMTA ensemble festivals is to encourage students to partner with another student, parent or relative and enjoy piano fun together. Ensemble Festival preparation and performance provides several benefits such as improved listening and rhythm skills, working together with dynamic plans, technical challenges, and learning to think on the spur of the moment when and if surprises occur. It is a unique and special opportunity and double the FUN!

MMTA State Contest (Video Submission) – Contest encourages meticulous work and high performance standards. The district Preliminary contest is held each year at the end of January or beginning of February. The State contest Finals are held about a month later, usually the first part of March. Students memorize one selection from the current year contest list according to their age as of September 1st. Age divisions range from Pre-Primary (age 6) through Senior B (ages 19 – 20). Students who receive a winning critique at contest preliminaries automatically advance to contest finals. Pianists with the highest scores in the Final Contest are selected for ensemble performance in the state Honors Concert. This Concert, held at the Minneapolis Convention Center, has grown into a gala event involving about 700 young performers playing on 20 grand pianos in an ensemble setting. It is an experience to remember forever. This past year, we were unable to hold this event due to the Pandemic. It was such a bummer, but safety for everyone remains the top priority. Each year, winning Students advance to the next higher category either by their age or winning status.

State Piano Solo Festival is new as of 2019! (Video Submissions) – This new opportunity is to encourage performance for students of all ages who do not want to compete in Piano Contest. They still memorize a piece from the current contest repertoire list and receive comments from a judge on their individual performance, but in a non-competitive setting. This event is held the same days as the MMTA Contest.

Theory Exams – Theory exams are a series of examinations sponsored by MMTA which measure individual achievement. Skills are developed in music theory notation, ear training, and analysis of structure and form. Students also learn how we relate these elements in our repertoire and keyboard facility. I recommend and support this program for all students, regardless if they take the exam or not. Beginning students will complete theory workbooks and/or note spellers that go along with method books prior to entering the MMTA theory workbooks. Many students achieve a sense of self-respect from participating in athletic

contests. These tests offer similar rewards in a musical setting. Each student receives a handsome certificate and ribbon as a reminder of their achievement. These tests assure parents that no aspect important to the student's musical development is being neglected. In 2020-2021, the written and aural portions of the exam will be done by students at home. Students will then meet with a judge via Skype or FaceTime on the exam date to play the keyboard portion of the exam.

Music Bridges – This program is open to students of any instrument or voice. It provides a critiqued forum where students can present a performance that features high achievement tailored to each student's individual abilities and interests. Students can explore and experience all areas of music and relationships between music and the other arts. The student creates a program, with the teacher's guidance, in which he or she can incorporate other interests and arts into a musical experience. Everything bridges back to music; and most importantly, everything bridges back to the individual. It allows and encourages creativity and is relevant to the individual's human experience. The student may also invite family members and friends for his or her critiqued performance. For 2020-2021, students will meet virtually with a judge on the day of the event.

There are many benefits to developing musicians when they participate in an MMTA program or event. It is an opportunity for growth in knowledge, performance skills, poise, maintaining a positive attitude, and dealing with deadlines. Most MMTA programs award certificates to students who have complete an event to celebrate their accomplishments. The MMTA Challenge Award provides an incentive for participation across MMTA programs. The intention is to reward students at every level of ability. My goal for each student is that they will take advantage of the many opportunities offered by MMTA to become the best they can be and feel proud of their achievements.